



A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

**1999 CCMP
IMPLEMENTATION
TRACKING REPORT
January-December 1999**

**The
Comprehensive
Conservation and
Management Plan
May 2000**

**THE
LONG
ISLAND
SOUND
STUDY**



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Report is the product of the Long Island Sound Study partnership of Federal, state, local and private agencies and organizations. The diversity of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Long Island Sound increases the difficulty and complexity in obtaining the information and data for this report. We wish to thank the states of Connecticut and New York for their invaluable assistance in compiling the data for the report and in coordinating their efforts with the many other state and local agencies and organizations participating in the Study.

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Foreword



This 1999 report documents the fifth year of implementation of the *Long Island Sound Study (LISS) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Long Island Sound (LIS)*. This Report summarizes the continuing work of the LISS Management Conference partners in carrying out the 232 commitments and recommendations in the CCMP.

The LISS Management Conference is sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), and the state of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP). Additional partners include the:

- ❖ **Interstate Sanitation Commission (ISC);**
- ❖ **U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS);**
- ❖ **New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP);**
- ❖ **U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS);**
- ❖ **New York State Department of State;**
- ❖ **LISS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); and the**
- ❖ **LISS Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).**

Many other federal, state, municipal academic, and local public and private organizations contribute to implementation of the CCMP. Among these are the:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE);

U.S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Geological Survey (USGS);

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service;

Connecticut Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture (CTDOA/BA);

New York State and State of Connecticut Departments of Health;

New York and Connecticut Sea Grant programs;

New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission;

University of Connecticut (UConn) campuses; and

State University of New York (SUNY) campuses.

Together, these Federal, state, local, academic, and citizen partners combine their efforts to achieve the common CCMP vision for the long-term health, restoration, and economic well-being of Long Island Sound, its watersheds and tributaries, and living marine and marine-dependent resources.



Executive Summary



SUMMARY OF 1999 CCMP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The most significant CCMP implementation accomplishment in 1999 was the development of a draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nitrogen in Long Island Sound. In November 1999 the states of New York and Connecticut released the draft TMDL for public comment, and extended the comment deadline into early 2000. The states and EPA are continuing work to finalize and issue the TMDL in 2000.

Interim to the final TMDL, both states have continued their commitment to reduce nitrogen loads from sewage treatment plants (STPs), and the loading trend from these point sources continues downward.

Nitrogen Loading Down

In 1999 the total point source nitrogen load to the Sound was estimated at 151,245 lbs/day, a decrease of nearly 36,000 lbs/day from 1990 levels, and nearly 10,000 lbs/day less than 1998. New York loadings totalled 105,759 lbs/day; Connecticut loads totalled 45,486 lbs/day.

Hypoxia Monitoring Continued

As LIS nitrogen loads continued to decrease in 1999, the primary indicator of excessive nitrogen, low (< 3mg/l) dissolved oxygen (DO) lessened in the Sound in 1999. The maximum area of low DO in LIS was estimated at 314 square kilometers (km²)(121mi²), with an overall duration of 50 days. This was less than the 1998 levels of 436 km² (167 mi²) and 73 days, and less than the 10 year averages of 470 km² (181 mi²) and 57 days.

Progress on Habitat Goals

The States of Connecticut and New York made good overall progress toward the LISS goal of restoring 2000 acres of tidal wetlands and 100 miles of river corridors for anadromous fish access within 10 years. To date, Connecticut has restored 68

acres of tidal wetland habitat, treated or retreated many acres of phragmites-infested habitat, and restored 22.5 miles of river corridor to anadromous fish access. The state of New York Department of Environmental Conservation awarded over \$2.5 million in 1999 Bond Act funds to communities on Long Island and in Bronx and Westchester counties for 9 projects to restore over 85 acres of aquatic habitat.

The LISS selected 373 sites for restoration, 228 in Connecticut, and 145 in New York, from the 450 sites nominated in both states. A total of 111 sites in both states have been designated as high-priority sites.

Addressing Toxic Contamination, Pathogens and Floatable Debris

Communities on and around the Sound are continuing to adopt watershed management-based approaches to controlling sources of pollution to the Sound, including point and nonpoint sources, CSOs, and land use practices. Many communities have formed watershed management committees or groups that cross local, municipal, or even state jurisdictions, to work together in addressing environmental management problems that have no boundaries.

New LIS Research Fund

The Management Committee established a new research program fund in 1999. The committee approved an initial \$100,000 for the fund from the LISS Federal appropriation. In addition, the New York and Connecticut Sea Grant programs contributed an additional \$25,000 each for a total 1999 fund of \$150,000. The LISS issued a Request for Proposals in November 1999 that netted 30 proposals totalling over \$3,000,000 in funding. Research projects will be selected after peer review in early 2000.

Reaching and Educating the Public

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The LISS outreach and education programs continued to conduct many meetings, conferences and workshops attended by hundreds of public officials and concerned citizens.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met in March, June, September, and December in 1999, and developed key recommendations to the Policy Committee, especially endorsing the creation of a Long Island Sound Reserve system, as called for in the CCMP. The CAC supported increased Federal funding to match the significant state financial commitments to the Sound, and provided comments on the draft TMDL for the public record.

At the initiative of the CAC, the LISS produced and distributed 5,000 copies of a series of four nonpoint source management posters that use humor to persuade people to take personal action to pick up after their pets, repair automobile oil leaks, reduce use of home fertilizers, and use conservation techniques when washing the car.

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The LISS produced and distributed many thousands of copies of its quarterly LIS newsletter, *UPDATE*, as well as fact sheets, publications, and brochures covering timely and critical LIS topics. Many of these documents were posted on the LISS web page: <http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis>. The LISS webpage continued to be the most visited page on the EPA New England Region website, with over 35,000 hits in 1999, or nearly 3,000 per month.

LISS staff continued to provide LIS displays at annual public events, such as Earth Day and LIS Days in Connecticut and New York; the Norwalk Oyster Festival, New Haven County Conservation Fair; address scores of teachers, educators, school children, groups and classes; and issue press releases, make public service announcements, and give radio and press interviews on LIS issues.



About the 1999 Report



UNDERSTANDING THIS REPORT

As in 1998, this 1999 CCMP Implementation Tracking Report is organized into seven sections, each corresponding to the seven priority management areas identified in the CCMP:

- 1) Continuing the Management Conference;
- 2) Hypoxia;
- 3) Pathogen Contamination;
- 4) Toxic Substances;
- 5) Floatable Debris;
- 6) Management and Conservation of Living Resources and Their Habitats; and
- 7) Public Involvement and Education.

Each of these sections contains a brief narrative that highlights accomplishments of the Management Conference in that area in 1999.

The charts following each narrative section in this report correspond to the appropriate table in the CCMP for each priority area. For tracking purposes, numbers have been assigned to each original CCMP action, e.g., H1-5 for Hypoxia, priority problem area number 1, action number 5, "Conduct feasibility studies and pilot demonstrations for nitrogen removal at 13 of 14 NYC STPs..."

The charts contain self-explanatory information on each of 232 action items identified in the CCMP, such as:

- ! Responsible Parties;
- ! Status;
- ! Description; and
- ! Upcoming Action

The charts distinguish actions under each of the seven priority areas as either:

*Ongoing Programs or
CCMP Actions.*

Ongoing Programs support CCMP commitments through the continuing environmental programs of the Management

Conference, such as state permitting, enforcement, or monitoring programs.

CCMP Actions are specific activities described in the CCMP that directly implement the LISS, and are further identified by Type as:

- N Commitment; or*
- N Recommendation.*

Commitments are programs for which the CCMP identified existing funding sources;

Recommendations are programs for which no existing funding streams had been identified.

Estimated Cost is provided if the 1994 CCMP established projected funding for the proposed action item.

CCMP Actions with target dates are designated as:

- Complete;
- Ahead of Schedule;
- On Schedule;
- Behind Schedule;
- Partially Addressed;
- Not Initiated.

For the convenience of the reader, *CCMP Actions that have been Completed* are "greyed out" in the report.

Status for Ongoing Programs or continuing CCMP Actions is designated as:

- "Fully Met;
- "Substantive Progress;
- "Partial Progress;
- "Discontinued.

An Annual Snapshot of Progress

Because of the inherent long-term nature of initiating and assessing the results of environmental restoration and improvement efforts, this report should be viewed as a one-year snapshot of accomplishments against the 232 actions identified in the CCMP. This report is not an expression of environmental results.

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Environmental Indicators

The LISS is continuing to develop a basic set of environmental indicators for Long Island Sound, with an ultimate goal of linking progress on the CCMP to actual environmental improvements in the Long Island Sound ecosystem. In this way, environmental results may be used in the future to assess the effectiveness of CCMP actions, and the Management Conference will be in a better position to consider and adjust CCMP plans, actions, and resources according to the environmental results desired or achieved.

The Management Conference partners plan to issue the first Long Island Sound environmental indicators report in 2000.

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IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN – 1999

Of the 232 action items identified in the CCMP, 28 percent (65) are being carried out by the Management Conference partners as part of their ongoing federal, state, or local environmental management programs. Substantive progress has been reported on the majority of *Ongoing Programs*.

The remaining 167 CCMP Actions represent 72 percent of the CCMP. Of these in 1999, 33 are reported as *Complete*; 38 are reported as *Substantive Progress/Fully Met*; 59 are reported as *Partial Progress/Behind Schedule*; and 34 are reported as *Not Initiated*. Three actions have been *Discontinued*.

